

Monmouth University  
Department of English  
Master of Arts in English

## **CREATIVE WRITING: INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MANUSCRIPT SEMINAR**

### **General Information**

The MA Creative Writing Manuscript constitutes the capstone to the student's work in the English MA program, and it should represent the student's strongest creative works.

The MA Manuscript should extend and deepen both thematically and stylistically the creative work written in previous MA-level courses, through intensive revision of that work and through the writing of new work, such that it can be used as a writing sample in a student's application for subsequent graduate study (MFA or PhD) or form the basis of an expanded, book-length work. If a Manuscript and defense are exceptional, the advisor may recommend awarding distinction. If a student's Manuscript is exceptional, the advisor may recommend that the student revise the manuscript in part or whole toward publication.

All students enrolling in Fall 2014 and after will register for three credits of mentored course work, EN644: Manuscript Seminar, normally taking three credits in the final semester of the MA program. All students enrolled in the Program prior to Fall 2014 will be strongly encouraged to switch to the new program by submitting e-form "Change Graduate Academic Program-Major."

### **Preparing and Registering for Manuscript Seminar**

The Manuscript will be written under the supervision of a full-time faculty member in the English Department with additional guidance from a Second Reader. The Manuscript Mentor will normally be a member of the Graduate Faculty. In cases where the Mentor is not a member of the Graduate Faculty, the Second Reader must be a member of the Graduate Faculty. In the semester before the student wishes to begin Manuscript Seminar, the student must identify the Manuscript Mentor and Second Reader, consult with the Graduate Program Director about the intent to begin, and with the Mentor and Second Reader set out the direction and scope of the Manuscript.

Before registering for Manuscript Seminar, the student must submit a 500-word Proposal describing the project's nature, aesthetic approach, formal considerations, and goals. Additionally, the student must prepare a syllabus, which follows the guidelines posted on the EN MA Thesis/Manuscript information webpage:

[http://www.monmouth.edu/uploadedFiles/Content/School\\_of\\_Humanities\\_-\\_Soc\\_Sci/departments/english/programs-of-study/ma-english/Manuscript%20Thesis%20Syllabus%20Guidelines.pdf](http://www.monmouth.edu/uploadedFiles/Content/School_of_Humanities_-_Soc_Sci/departments/english/programs-of-study/ma-english/Manuscript%20Thesis%20Syllabus%20Guidelines.pdf)

The student should consult with the Manuscript Mentor and the Second Reader in preparing the Proposal and Syllabus. Preparation of the Proposal is not a formality, but a substantive part of the intellectual and creative process of developing a project of appropriate focus.

Registration for Manuscript Seminar is accomplished when the Manuscript Mentor submits an advisor initiated eform titled "GR Thesis-Project-Practicum-Internship," attaching the final drafts of Proposal and Syllabus as pdf documents.

During the semester of registration for Manuscript Seminar, the student will submit previously written creative work as well as new creative work in a single genre to the Mentor, and will substantially revise that work in consultation with the Mentor. The student will also prepare an arrangement that demonstrates each work's unique characteristics while allowing the works to enhance each other and suggest a cohesive vision. The manuscript may consist of poems, short stories, plays, creative nonfiction, a novella, or (with the Mentor's permission) sections of a larger work in a single genre.

The length of the Manuscript shall be determined by the candidate and mentor and be appropriate to the genre-- generally not more than 80 pages, exclusive of aesthetic statement, table of contents, acknowledgments, notes, or similar materials. Normally, 40-50 pages for poetry or prose or 80 pages for drama will be deemed sufficient.

### **Manuscript Seminar**

During Manuscript Seminar, the student will complete 40-50 pages of poetry or prose, or 80 pages of drama, consisting of previously written work that has been revised substantially along with new work. At least half of the work must be new. In addition, the student will craft the prose Introduction (3-5 pages) to the manuscript, consisting of a statement of aesthetics, a consideration of influences, and a discussion of the discipline and craft evident in the creative work. Also, the student will complete the 20 annotations for the Bibliography. Such items may include novels; novellas; plays; books of creative non-fiction, short fiction, or poetry; books on craft; volumes of correspondence; biographies and/or autobiographies; books of interviews; critical studies; and journal articles. Each item in the Annotated Bibliography should include one to two substantial paragraphs of commentary, including summary as well as comments on how the item reflects or does not reflect the manuscript's aesthetic underpinnings. The entire Annotated Bibliography will consist of approximately 20 pages.

A student who wishes to complete Manuscript Seminar in Summer must register in Session C, and then only with a Manuscript Mentor in residence for the majority of the term and with permission of the Graduate Program Director.

A complete draft of the Manuscript should be submitted no later than the tenth week of the semester to the Mentor and the Second Reader to allow feedback with time for revision before the Defense.

Once the Manuscript has been judged as satisfactory by both readers, the Graduate Program Director will schedule an oral defense to be attended by both readers as well as the Graduate Program Director. This should occur during the last week of regularly scheduled classes (not during final exams). The faculty of the English department will be invited to attend. The Defense will normally last one hour, during which the student will read, with commentary, a portion of the Manuscript (or, in the case of drama, present a scene from the play), then answer questions from the faculty. Following the Defense, the student must submit a revised version of the Manuscript in digital form as well as in hard copy. Two bound copies of the Manuscript will be produced: one will be archived in the Monmouth University Library and one in the English Department. Students whose Manuscripts are awarded Distinction may give permission for their Theses to be digitally archived.

Prerequisites: Completion of 21 credits and a minimum GPA of 3.00.

For additional information, please consult Dr. Kristin Bluemel, Graduate Program Director, at (732) 571-3622 or [kbluemel@monmouth.edu](mailto:kbluemel@monmouth.edu).

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